

## The Buildings of Dalhousie University

[Buildings Home](#)

[About the Project](#)

[Chronology](#)

[Building Index](#)

[Contact Us](#)

# F. H. Sexton Memorial Gymnasium (J Building)

Address: 1360 Barrington St.

Start Date: 1962

Completion Date: 1963

Architect: Andris Kundzins

Renovation Date(s): 1973; 1977; 1985- 86; 1992-93

Contractor: Annapolis Valley Construction



F. H. Sexton Memorial Gymnasium - Exterior - Spring, May 1990



F. H. Sexton Memorial Gymnasium - Exterior - Winter, n.d.



F. H. Sexton Memorial Gymnasium - Exterior - Winter - Street Scene, 1989

## Building History

The gymnasium building of the former Nova Scotia Technical College/Technical University of Nova Scotia was designed by architect Andris Kundzins of the firm Duffus, Romans & Single, Architects & Engineers of Halifax, NS and built by Annapolis Valley Construction. The building ultimately cost \$415,000, provided by the Nova Scotia government, the Nova Scotia Technical College Alumni Association and contributions from Canadian industry.

After receiving the blessing of the College's Board of Governors, the F.H. Sexton Building Memorial Fund was launched on November 1, 1957. It was the first appeal ever made by the Nova Scotia Technical College Alumni Association on behalf of the College. This fundraising committee was chaired by 1928 Civil Engineering graduate Charles P. Roper, with satellite committees set up throughout Canada and the initial objective of raising \$300,000 by the fall of 1959 so that sod could be turned during the College's Golden Anniversary Reunion activities.

On May 8, 1962, Mrs. Anne Sexton, widow of the late Dr. F.H. Sexton, turned the sod on the grounds of the new gymnasium building. Nova Scotia Premier Robert L. Stanfield, College President George W. Holbrook and Mr. Albert G. Ley, President of the College's Alumni Association, were also in attendance.

The official opening was held on Monday, May 6, 1963. The building was officially opened by the Hon. Robert L. Stanfield, Nova Scotia Premier and chairman of the Nova Scotia Technical College's Board of Governors. The invocation was given by the Rt.-Rev. R.H. Waterman, Bishop of Nova Scotia, and the benediction was given by the Rt.-Rev. W.H. Smith, Vicar-General of the Archdiocese of Halifax. Chairing the ceremonies was Nova Scotia Technical College Alumni Association president J.P. Vaughan. Also in attendance were: Ms. Sexton; Mr. Charles P. Roper, chairman of the new building's fundraising committee; Mr. J.G. Belliveau, chairman of the building committee; Mr. Les Single of Halifax architectural and engineering firm Duffus, Romans & Single, which designed the building; and Mr. H.R. Garland of Annapolis Valley Construction, the building's

contractors.

The building's exterior is finished in Shaw's New Glasgow brown brick. Its striking, elegant look - notably its curved slope of a roof - led the 1963 Canadian Steel Conference to praise it as Canada's most beautiful steel building of the year. It originally housed a large gymnasium-auditorium, a common room, a cafeteria, and student and Alumni offices.

As of the spring of 1963 and until 1980, the College's convocation ceremonies were held on campus in the new gym building. As of 1981, the size of the graduating classes precipitated the move of the ceremonies to the Halifax Metro Centre.

In the summer of 1973, the building received a new roof, funded by a special grant from the Province of Nova Scotia's University Grants Committee. The contract for \$29,881 was awarded to Hamilton Roofing.

In October 1977, the building's old Common Room was converted into an individual sports facility. New gym equipment was also provided to the College, thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor.

Fundraising for the eagerly-anticipated Student Amenities Building Project was led by Alumni Association President Mr. Gerry Belliveau, and it was a Capital Funding Project under the Nova Scotia Tech 1990 Fund umbrella rather than under that of the College's Continuing (Annual Giving) Fund. In January 1985, the 1990 Fund/Development Office and the College's Alumni Association co-sponsored a telethon which appealed to approximately 700 alumni and raised \$20,000. A fundraising Fun Run was held on March 31, 1985, and it also met with success.

On December 4, 1985, Dr. Sexton's widow, Mrs. Anne Sexton, broke ground on the site of Phase One of the Student Amenities Building project with the same silver shovel she used 22 years earlier to turn the first sod for the F.H. Sexton Memorial Gymnasium (J) Building. Assisting Mrs. Sexton was Dr. H.W.L. Doane, Honourary President of the TUNS Alumni Association, and Ms. Sandra Crockett, TUNS Student Union President.

In 1986, the extension to the gym building was completed, the first of the new Student Amenities Building's two phases. The addition features expanded T-Room facilities, a new weight room, racquetball courts and expanded locker rooms. The addition was designed by the architectural firm Dumaresq and White and the construction work was done by L.R. White Construction. The official opening on January 21, 1987 was attended by: Dr. John M. Buchanan, Premier of Nova Scotia; Dr. Harvey W.L. Doane, the Honourary President of the TUNS Alumni Association; the Hon. John Buchanan, Premier of Nova Scotia; Dr. J. Clair Callaghan, President of TUNS; Ms. Sandra Crockett, TUNS Student Union President; Ms. Joan Parsons-Doehler, TUNS Alumni Association President; and Mr. Gordon Mader, Chairman of the Buildings and Grounds Committee of the TUNS Board of Governors.

The first phase of the building project was budgeted at just over \$2 million. The roughly 21,000 square-foot addition was built between the Sexton Memorial Gymnasium Building and the MacNab (A) Building. The project was funded by the TUNS Alumni Association, the Windsor Foundation and from private sector contributions to the

TUNS 1990 Fund, which was dedicated to advancing technical education and research.

To help fund the second phase of the Student Amenities Building Project, a 'Buy A Brick' campaign was started in December 1985. These bricks came from the old Carriage House on campus, a small 19th century building which was demolished to make way for the first phase of the building project. Although the Carriage House had outlived its usefulness, the bricks themselves were highly prized, fetching up to \$2,500 apiece from some collectors.

In July 1992, as part of a \$3 million campus construction project, the McNab Building became linked to the Sexton Gymnasium Building by a skylit stairway.

On June 28, 1993, the J Building's new 1,100 square-foot Campus Fitness Centre opened, complete with state-of-the-art aerobic and strength training equipment. The Centre was completely funded by a corporate donation and agreement with Pepsi-Cola Canada Beverages, which was negotiated through the Department of Community Relations Director Barbara Watt and included new uniforms for varsity sports teams for the next five years. In addition, both a ramp to the gymnasium and an elevator were added to the building to make it more wheelchair accessible. In the T-Room, a newly-designed and constructed bar replaced the older, unsatisfactory one.

The J Building was named after Dr. Frederic Henry Sexton, founder and president of the Nova Scotia Technical College and the Director of Technical Education for the Province of Nova Scotia, both from 1907 until his retirement in 1947.

Born in New Boston, NH on June 9, 1879, Dr. Sexton graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1901 with a Bachelor of Science and instructed there until his appointment as Assistant Professor of Mining Engineering at Dalhousie in 1904. In 1907, Dr. Sexton was chosen by the Province of Nova Scotia as both its first Director of Technical Education and President of Nova Scotia Technical College. During his early years in those positions, Dr. Sexton simultaneously organized the nation's first system of technical education and "laid the foundations for the future growth of the Nova Scotia Technical College" ([Dr. Frederick Henry Sexton]).

Dr. Sexton put his passion for and knowledge of vocational education to use during both World Wars. For World War II, he was chosen to organize a training program in Nova Scotia for technical personnel for both the armed service and civilian work. After the war he carried out an extensive program of rehabilitation training for discharged service personnel which represented the largest program of vocational education ever undertaken in Nova Scotia.

In 1919, Dr. Sexton was given honorary Doctor of Laws and Doctor of Science degrees from Dalhousie and Acadia Universities respectively. For his work in preparing both armed forces and civilian personnel for World War II, Dr. Sexton was appointed Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire in 1943, by His Majesty, the late King George VI. In 1947, Mount Allison University awarded Dr. Sexton his honorary Doctor of Civil Law degree.

Dr. Sexton died in Wolfville, NS on January 12, 1955.

## References

[Top](#)



Revised on  
Comments to the [Webmaster](#)

## The Buildings of Dalhousie University

[Buildings Home](#)

[About the Project](#)

[Chronology](#)

[Building Index](#)

[Contact Us](#)

# F. H. Sexton Memorial Gymnasium (J Building)

Address: 1360 Barrington St.

Start Date: 1962

Completion Date: 1963

Architect: Andris Kundzins

Renovation Date(s): 1973; 1977; 1985- 86; 1992-93

Contractor: Annapolis Valley Construction



F. H. Sexton Memorial Gymnasium - Under Construction - Aerial, August 1962



F. H. Sexton Memorial Gymnasium - Exterior - Under Construction, August 1962

## References

### Online Resources

### Online Encyclopedia

- Rose, Phyllis. "Sexton, Frederic Henry." The Canadian Encyclopedia. Toronto: Historica Foundation of Canada, 2005. Accessed 27 June 2005. Available from URL: <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1ARTA0005533>. Internet.

## Photographs

### Dalhousie University Photograph Collection

- Contact Sheet [exteriors of A, B & C Buildings and the Sexton Memorial Gymnasium, and two classroom scenes]. n.d. PC-1, 36.6.23.
- F. H. Sexton Memorial Gymnasium [exterior - spring]. May 1990. PC-1, 36.6.22.
- F. H. Sexton Memorial Gymnasium [exterior - summer]. n.d. PC-1, 36.6.20.
- F. H. Sexton Memorial Gymnasium [exterior - under construction]. August 1962. PC-1, 36.6.11.
- F. H. Sexton Memorial Gymnasium [exterior - under construction]. n.d. PC-1, 36.6.10.
- F. H. Sexton Memorial Gymnasium [exterior - winter - trees]. n.d. PC-1, 36.6.21.
- F. H. Sexton Memorial Gymnasium [exterior - winter]. n.d. PC-1, 36.6.13.
- F. H. Sexton Memorial Gymnasium [exterior - winter]. n.d. PC-1, 36.6.14.
- F. H. Sexton Memorial Gymnasium [exterior - winter]. n.d. PC-1, 36.6.15.
- F. H. Sexton Memorial Gymnasium [exterior - winter]. n.d. PC-1, 36.6.16.
- F. H. Sexton Memorial Gymnasium [exterior - winter]. n.d. PC-

- 1, 36.6.17.
- F. H. Sexton Memorial Gymnasium [exterior, with Nova Scotia Technical College sign]. n.d. PC-1, 36.6.19.
- F. H. Sexton Memorial Gymnasium [exterior, with pedestrian]. September 1967. PC-1, 36.6.18.
- F. H. Sexton Memorial Gymnasium [exterior]. n.d. PC-1, 36.6.9.
- F. H. Sexton Memorial Gymnasium [under construction - aerial]. August 1962. PC-1, 36.6.12.
- F.H. Sexton Memorial Gymnasium [exterior - winter - street scene]. 1989. PC-1, 36.6.25.
- Opening Student Amenities Building [-] Premier John Buchanan; Dr. J.C. Callaghan, Pres. TUNS; Dr. Harvey Doane, Hon. Pres TUNS Alumni; Sandra Crockett, Pres. TUNS Student Council; Joan Doehler, Pres. TUNS Alumni. 1987. UA-10, 80.7.1.
- Sexton Memorial Gymnasium [fish-eye lens shot]. n.d. PC-1, 36.6.26.
- Sexton Memorial Gymnasium. 1988. PC-1, 36.6.24.
- Sexton Memorial Gymnasium[,] C.B.C. Staged The Performers. June 1971. PC-1, 36.6.27.
- Sexton Memorial Gymnasium[,] C.B.C. Staged The Performers. June 1971. PC-1, 36.6.28.

### **Nova Scotia Technical College/TUNS/DalTech/Sexton Files**

- [Student Amenities Building - Gym - 1]. n.d. UA-10, 86.32.11.
- [Student Amenities Building - Gym - 2]. n.d. UA-10, 86.32.12.
- Building - TUNS [11 images] [file]. 199?. UA-10, 80.23.
- F.H. Sexton Memorial Gymnasium [and] Ira P. MacNab Building - Administration and Library. 1969. UA-10, 79.44.13.
- F.H. Sexton Memorial Gymnasium [exterior - spring/summer, with trees]. n.d. UA-10, 79.44.1.
- F.H. Sexton Memorial Gymnasium [exterior - winter]. n.d. UA-10, 79.44.10.
- Items 1-27. 1985-1992. UA-10, 99.2.

### **Publications**

#### **Books**

- Atlantic Modern: The Architecture of the Atlantic Provinces 1950-2000. Ed. Steven Mannell. [Halifax, NS]: TUNS Press, 2004.

#### **Nova Scotia Technical College Annual Report [by academic year]**

- Nova Scotia Technical College Annual Report. 1972/73, p. 17-18. Killam Library, call no. T 173 N613.

#### **The [Halifax] Chronicle Herald Mail-Star**

- "Nova Scotia Tech 1990 Fund." The [Halifax] Chronicle Herald Mail-Star. January 2, 1980, p. 3-T.

#### **The [Halifax] Mail-Star**

- "M.M. O'Brien Hall." The [Halifax] Mail-Star. November 6, 1967, p. 12.

- "O'Brien Hall First Residence In Tech's History." The [Halifax] Mail-Star. November 6, 1967, p. 13.
- "Tribute Paid To Sexton As Auditorium Opened." The [Halifax] Mail-Star. May 7, 1963, p. 3.

## **Textual Records**

### **Artifacts (1988, 1991-present) [TUNS/DalTech/Dalhousie Engineering Yearbook]**

- "Men at Work." Artifacts. 1992, p. 12-13.
- "New Facilities Officially Opened." Artifacts. 1993, p. 10-11.
- "New Facilities." Artifacts. 1994, [p. 50-51].

### **Nova Scotia Technical College Alumni Association Alumni Bulletin (1946-1969)**

- Nova Scotia Technical College Alumni Association Alumni Bulletin. April 1947, p. 1-2. Box 55, Sexton Design & Technology Library Stored Records Room (Sexton Campus, A Building).
- Nova Scotia Technical College Alumni Association Alumni Bulletin. June 1957, p. 4. Box 55, Sexton Design & Technology Library Stored Records Room (Sexton Campus, A Building).
- Nova Scotia Technical College Alumni Association Alumni Bulletin. June 1962, p. 3. Box 55, Sexton Design & Technology Library Stored Records Room (Sexton Campus, A Building).
- Nova Scotia Technical College Alumni Association Alumni Bulletin. March 1963, p. 5. Box 55, Sexton Design & Technology Library Stored Records Room (Sexton Campus, A Building).
- Nova Scotia Technical College Alumni Association Alumni Bulletin. November 1957, p. 2- 3. Box 55, Sexton Design & Technology Library Stored Records Room (Sexton Campus, A Building).

### **Nova Scotia Technical College/TUNS (Administrative) Newsletter**

- Nova Scotia Technical College/TUNS (Administrative) Newsletter. July 1973, p. 1. Box 60, Sexton Design & Technology Library Stored Records Room (Sexton Campus, A Building).

### **Nova Scotia Technical College/TUNS/DalTech/Sexton Files**

- [Dr. Frederick Henry Sexton]. n.d. UA-10, 7.1.
- Baker, Max. Nova Scotia Technical College 1907-1966 (A History of the Tech System written by Dr. Max Baker) [document]. n.d. UA-10, 7.1.
- General Information - History [photocopied pages from booklet]. n.d. UA-10, 7.1.
- History of the University. n.d. UA-10, 4.5.
- Hoare, Eva. "New students' centre officially opens: TUNS technological 'focal point'" [newspaper article]. The [Halifax] Chronicle-Herald. January 22, 1987, p. .
- Nova Scotia Technical College. Some Pertinent Facts. n.d. UA-10, 4.2.

- Roy, Ann. ["'Sexton Connection' continues at TUNS with new facility"] [text of newspaper article]. (December 6, 1985). UA-10, 7.1.
- Verma, Dharendra. "Frederick H. Sexton: Canadian Dean of Vocational Education." Journal of Education 6.3 (1979-80): p. 18-26.

### **Tech Bulletin (1971-1989; also Mini-Bulletin in 1981, 1986 & 1987)**

- Tech Bulletin. Fall 1977, p. 4. Box 55, Sexton Design & Technology Library Stored Records Room (Sexton Campus, A Building).
- Tech Bulletin. Fall/Winter 1983, p. 3, 7-9. Box 56, Sexton Design & Technology Library Stored Records Room (Sexton Campus, A Building).
- Tech Bulletin. May 1986, p. 3, 18. Box 56, Sexton Design & Technology Library Stored Records Room (Sexton Campus, A Building).
- Tech Bulletin. Spring 1982, p. 4. Box 56, Sexton Design & Technology Library Stored Records Room (Sexton Campus, A Building).
- Tech Bulletin. Spring 1985, p. 1-2. Box 56, Sexton Design & Technology Library Stored Records Room (Sexton Campus, A Building).
- Tech Bulletin. Spring 1986, p. i. Box 56, Sexton Design & Technology Library Stored Records Room (Sexton Campus, A Building).

### **Tech Flash (1920-1987) [Nova Scotia Technical College/TUNS Yearbook]**

- "Our New T-Room." Tech Flash. 1978, p. 72-73.
- "TUNS Grows with Addition of New Student Amenities Building." Tech Flash. 1987, p. 14-15.

### **Tech News (1963-1989)**

- Tech News. October 11, 1963, p. 1. Box 57, Sexton Design & Technology Library Stored Records Room (Sexton Campus, A Building).

### **Tnotes (1990-1998) [TUNS news bulletin]**

- Tnotes. April 1992, [p. 13]. Box 56, Sexton Design & Technology Library Stored Records Room (Sexton Campus, A Building).
- Tnotes. August 1993, p. 2. Box 56, Sexton Design & Technology Library Stored Records Room (Sexton Campus, A Building).

### **TUNS Annual Report [by academic year]**

- TUNS Annual Report. 1985/86, p. 26. Box 46, Sexton Design & Technology Library Stored Records Room (Sexton Campus, A Building).

## **Building History**



[Top](#)



Revised on  
Comments to the [Webmaster](#)